

GEOGRAPHY AND THE STUDY OF MUSIC

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ABSTRACT

The scholarly study of music is Musicology. Musicology deals with structure, methodology, language text and music text of music. Not only the performed form of music but, obviously, the cultural text is also important in Musicology. Some basic focused areas of Musicology are- Music Theories, Historical Musicology, Ethnomusicology and Folk Musicology. From the perspective of Geography as a sub field of Social Science, the study of music shall able to give light on social and cultural pattern of human being. The paper tries to highlight to explain how Geographical milieu is related with Musicology.

Keywords: *folk music, Musicology, Ethnomusicology, Folk Musicology, society, environment, society*

INTRODUCTION

Music is a social science, no doubt of it. Music is a counter part of human culture. No other form of human culture throughout the history of human civilization has such kind of power to create or recreate the society like music. There are many branches of music study that have evolved to understand properly the scientific aspects of music, aesthetics of music, philosophy of music, ethnographical and anthropological dimensions of music, even the economics of music. Musicology, Ethnomusicology, and Folk Musicology are the examples of such divisions of music study.

From the doctrine of Physical Geography and Human Geography, we may take an attempt to deal with study of music. That shall be fair, if we observe the focal themes of different branches of music study and explain it through a Geographer's spectacle.

CONCEPT OF MUSICOLOGY

The analysis of structure and methodology of music is known as musicology. According to Mriganka Sekhar Chakraborty (1992) –“Musicology is a study of music or a branch of knowledge in the field of research, especially in historical and theoretical investigation – cum- analysis of specific types of music. It helps us to know the rudimentary elements of music since its inception downwards to the present. Types of music are specified with respect to lands and time.”

Musicology is the scientific discussion of music. It helps us to know the history of origin, development and process of music. So musicology is the theoretical and intellectual appreciation of music. General musicology focuses on the following –

i. Theory of Music, ii. History of Music, iii. History of Musical Instrument, iv. Music Education, v. Ethnomusicology, vi. Aesthetics of music, vii. Psychology of Music, viii. Performance of Music, ix. Composition of Music, x. Scientific Inquiry of Music and, xi. Scientific Analysis of Music.

GEOGRAPHY AND MUSICOLOGY

The most popular definition of geography discloses that the study of earth surface is geography. The physical and cultural elements are altogether present on the earth surface. The scientific and scholarly study of music is musicology. We can give a look into this study from the perspective of physical and cultural geography separately. Firstly, the physical environment influences the origin, structure and evolution of music. One specific set of physical environment like climate, topology, soil, vegetation and type of water bodies largely determin the production of sound and dialects. The production of sound changes with every mile with the changing dialect. This change is inevitably related with physical geography. For example, in Rurh Bengal (western part of West Bengal namely Purulia, Birbhum, Bankura, and part of Burdwan) the undulating topology, lateritic soil and unavailability of water influence the music basically the folksong. In *Jhumur* song if we concentrate a language text, it is about the description of physical environment mainly or a *Bhatiyali* singer as a boatman spent a lot of time in wet condition. Thus the cracking of voice is natural for them. And this cracking of voice makes the identity of *Bhatiyali* song. So it is the physical environment which makes a particular style of folk song. Again the use of folk musical instrument is related to a particular physical and climatic set-up. Use of bamboo for making flute is common in tropical areas. In *Jhumur*, a tropical folk song style, the use of bamboo flute is inevitable.

Secondly, the study of musicology is incomplete without the cultural geography -the study about people and their societies. Without mentioning the music and musicological aspects of a society, the study of cultural geography is incomplete. But thankfully in last forty years, musicological study has got its importance as a part

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of culture. There is a give and take relation between music and culture. The culture produces the content for music and at the same time music some time gives the stored information for the new comer people in a cultural sphere. Sometimes, new culture penetrates with the help of music. For example, the 'Bengali Band Songs' bring a new culture among the young people of West Bengal. So music also helps in acculturation process because the attitude and gesture of band songs are borrowed from Western Countries and a group of listeners are practicing a rocker's way of life in urban region of West Bengal and also in Bangladesh.

In this new scholarly atmosphere, all over the world, we can't stop the cross cut of disciplines. Geography and musicology is such two disciplines which should be studied in 'Geography of Music' for the proper understanding of music as on branch of social science and geography.

CONCEPT OF ETHNOMUSICOLOGY

A major theme in musicology is ethnomusicology. To analyze the cultural backbone of music is the main concerning area of ethnomusicology. Music does not only mean the lyrics and tune but also the ethnic pattern of people who are involved with the music, their social perspectives, psychological perspectives and occupation etc. and within time broad frame work of cultural pattern, the discussion and analysis of music in the area of ethnomusicology. Field work and ethnography are two major methods of ethnomusicology.

In this regard, one definition is relevant, it is "The study of music in the relation to the culture that produced it" (Ammer 1972). And this culture is related to regional social structure, occupation and social institution. If marriage is a social institution, then the music or song of marriage in Orrisa(*Kandnageet*) is different in Santals of West Bengal (*Dong Sereng*). The answer is hidden in the social structure of this two societies and ethnomusicology is the only key to know the proper answer.

Famous ethnomusicologist, Bruno Nettl in 1993 stated the scope and content of ethnomusicology which is very much related with the study of geography of music. Three basic fields of ethnomusicology are –

A. Materials to be studied

- i. Folk and what used to be called "Primitive" i.e. tribal or possibly ancient music.
- ii. Non Western or folk music.
- iii. All music outside the investigators' own culture
- iv. All music that lives in oral tradition
- v. The music of given locality, as in ethnomusicology of Bengal and
- vi. The music that given population group regarded as their particular property.

B. Types of Activity

- i. Comparative study of musical systems and cultures.
- ii. The study of music in or as culture, or perhaps music in its cultural content and
- iii. Historical study of oriental and 'primitive' music.

C. The Goals of Ethnomusicology:

- i. Description of all factors which generate the pattern of sound proceeds by single composer of society.
- ii. The science of music history, aiming at the establishment of laws governing musical development and change.

ETHNOMUSICOLOGY, SOCIETY AND ENVIRONMENT

Where ethnography deals with the study of human societies and ethnology gives the holistic idea of origin, structure, distribution, language, religion and technology of the ethnic, racial and division of humanity, the ethnomusicology deals with 'the study of social and cultural aspects of music and dance in local and global context.

Ethnomusicology was previously known as "Comparative Musicology" where the different styles of music and its language text and music text were the main concerning area. But afterwards, the scholars like Jaap Kunst and other were dissatisfied with the subject matter and the term "Comparative Musicology". They suggested the name of the subject as "Ethnomusicology" where the ethnic pattern and influence of social processes and organization along with the environment of the community took the central stage of the subject. The study about people and their society with culture is the focal theme of any Social Science, interestingly, Ethnomusicology also deals with the above mentioned elements, and thus, this subject is also a part of Social Sciences.

Look at the prefix of Ethnomusicology; here "Ethno" comes from Ethnicity. What is ethnicity? "Ethnicity is an idea that is purely social in meaning. Ethnicity refers to the cultural practices and outlooks of a given community of people that set them apart from others (Giddens, A. 2006). Again look at the definition and particularly the words like-"social", "cultural practice", "community" etc, which tell us the fact that Ethnomusicology deals with these terms. Music, its origin, evolution and performance lay within the origin, evolution and practice of the society. A particular social and environmental condition produces a particular music. So, Ethnomusicology is actually, the mixture of essences of environment, society and music.

CONCEPT OF FOLK MUSICOLOGY

As the scientific study of folk culture is known as folk loristics, the scientific study of folk song is folk musicology. In previous time, the researchers were more oriented to collect folk song and discovered language text and to some extent music text. But the anthropogenic and social appreciations were neglected music text

and language texts are first two dimensions of folk song, then obviously the third dimension of folk song is cultural text. The social and cultural realities flow with time through folk song. For example, *Baul* bears the philosophy of their society; in marriage song of Muslims, the position of the women in society is reflected and in *Bhawaiya*, the regional psycho- social character of people is visible like a mirror. So, to know the culture, it is must to know the music – as per the anthropological view. In this context, Shepherd (1999) said “to think of music or a cultural text is to imply that social or cultural elements are contained within or passed through its sonic components”.

REGION AND FOLK MUSICOLOGY

We already know that the scholarly study of folk music is Folk Musicology. Every folk music style is localized, every folk music pattern possesses a definite regional identity.

Let us take an example from a plateau region. Chotonagpur is a plateau region and the birth place of *Jhumur*. Santal, Oraon and Munda are the main residing tribal group of this region. At the time of origin, *Jhumur* was made with four notes. Then the tribal groups migrated from Chotonagpur to Manbhum, Bankura, Purulia, Birbhum, Jalpaiguri and the tea gardens of Assam. The process of acculturation was started and the mixing up with other groups brought a new pattern in *Jhumur*. The structure was changed according to the changed environment and region. In Asansol- Raniganj region, *Jhumur* was become more sophisticated. On the other hand, in the Assam region, *Jhumur* took the structural pattern of *Bihu* with its five notes.

So, folk song is the product of region- there is no wrong with this statement. At one hand any folk musical style or structure is taking its proper shape with the great impact of region; on the other hand, some folk musical styles are subject to change in different regions.

CONCLUSION

Geography of Music is now an established branch of Cultural Geography in United States, Canada, and United Kingdom. In this paper, a humble attempt has been taken to blend the Geography and Music, especially folk music. It is also possible to analyze the aspects of popular music through Geography. Broadly, two approaches are applicable, geographically, to conceptualize the idea of Music Geography. The localized identity of folk music can be derived by the Regional Approach and the mixed and globalized nature of popular music can be seen by the Systematic Approach. The changing nature of music or the evolution of music may also be analyzed by these two approaches.

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